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CHILDREN, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: UNICEF RESPONSE TO AGENDA 21

SUMMARY

Recognizing that the goals of the World Summit for Children are consistent with those of Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, UNICEF places special emphasis on the concept that "our planet must be preserved in order to nurture our children; equally, our children must be better nurtured to preserve our planet". The present report contains recommendations for UNICEF implementation of relevant parts of Agenda 21.

To this effect, UNICEF advocates "primary environmental care", a community-based approach to meet basic needs through the empowerment of local communities, while ensuring the protection and optimal utilization of natural resources within the community. Priority should be given to the most vulnerable - especially children, women and the very poor - who are threatened by drought and desertification, urban poverty and the destruction of tropical forests and fragile mountain ecosystems. Environmental education should be promoted to encourage the active participation of women and children, to enhance their life skills and adaptability and to enable them to attain a sustainable livelihood. Attention is also needed in building partnerships among government agencies, non-governmental organizations, research institutions and local communities.

It is recommended that environmental soundness and sustainability become prominent features in the UNICEF programming process and that analytical tools be developed to facilitate that process. Advocacy and social mobilization are also necessary to incorporate the concerns of children and women into relevant policies and strategies at local, regional and national levels.

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I. BACKGROUND

1. At its 1992 session, the Executive Board requested the Executive Director to "submit at its 1993 regular session a report that incorporates recommendations for the UNICEF response, primarily through country programmes, for effective implementation of relevant parts of Agenda 21 with due consideration to appropriate inter-agency coordination and collaboration" (E/ICEF/1992/14, decision 1992/31). The present report is in response to that request. Chapter I describes Agenda 21 from the UNICEF perspective and outlines General Assembly resolution 47/191 of 22 December 1992 concerning the institutional arrangement for follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Chapter II contains the UNICEF response to these important developments. It is based on two earlier decisions of the Executive Board regarding (a) the broad policy framework for UNICEF action in support of environment and sustainable development (E/ICEF/1989/12, decision 1989/18); and (b) UNICEF development goals and strategies for children in the 1990s (E/ICEF/1990/13, decision 1990/2). Recommendations for Executive Board approval are contained in chapter III.

A. Human-centred, poverty-alleviating focus of Agenda 21

2. Agenda 21, the operational document on environment and sustainable development for the twenty-first century, provides a framework for comprehensive and far-reaching action to grapple with the challenges that lie ahead. From the point of view of UNICEF and, indeed, children, there are three areas of particular importance.

3. First, UNCED has accorded human beings a central role in the search for solutions to environmental problems. Agenda 21 emphasizes social and economic dimensions as much as conservation and management of resources, thus advocating balanced models of sustainable development. Therefore, combating poverty will be as important as curbing profligate consumption, and the principles of equity and justice as important as the physical environment. Furthermore, UNCED has recognized that all groups in society have distinct roles to play in the proper management of the earth through a unified, mutually reinforcing, multisectoral effort. It is especially noteworthy that emphasis has been placed on the full participation of marginalized groups - women, children and youth, indigenous persons and those under domination or occupation - and on mobilization of their creativity, ideals and courage, recognition of their knowledge and traditional practices and support for their identity, culture and interests.

4. Second, UNCED has made the most significant attempt to date to unite the dual concerns of environmental degradation and poverty. The Rio Declaration states that the eradication of poverty is indispensable to sustainable development and that the developmental and environmental requirements of present and future generations must be met equitably. From the point of view of millions of the poorest families on earth, the principal environmental concerns are: the ever-present threat of disease; the decline in household food security, often related to inadequacies in agricultural practices and loss of fertility of farmland; and the lack of clean water supply and safe sanitation. For the poor, environmental degradation threatens their means of livelihood. To

protect the environment, they must have alternative opportunities for a better livelihood and their participation and empowerment are essential in the search for sustainable solutions. However, if one fifth of the world's population continues to consume four fifths of the world's resources - and produce most of the pollution and waste - disparity will remain, poverty will continue, population growth will escalate, the environment will deteriorate and no lasting solutions to the crises will be found.

5. Third, UNCED went further than any other international meeting in emphasizing the importance of collaboration between Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the need for a democratic, participatory approach to environment and development. NGOs are at the cutting edge of the environmental movement; no Government or international agency can afford to ignore their vital contribution. The scores of NGO events that took place prior to UNCED and during the UNCED Global Forum provided a wealth of new ideas, insights and practical suggestions. The time has come to cement new partnerships, alliances and coalitions among Governments, international agencies, NGOs, the private sector and social, civic and religious movements of all kinds.

B. Children and Agenda 21

6. Agenda 21 recognizes that infants and children need special protection and education. Paragraph 6.19 states: "Approximately one third of the world's population are children under 15 years o d. At least 15 million of these children die annually from such preventable causes as birth trauma, birth asphyxia, acute respiratory infections [ARI], malnutrition, communicable diseases and diarrhoea. The health of children is affected more severely than other population groups by malnutrition and adverse environmental factors, and many children risk exploitation as cheap labour or in prostitution". Accordingly, Agenda 21 acknowledges that "specific major goals for child survival, development and protection were agreed upon at the World Summit for Children and remain valid also for Agenda 21" (para. 6.24). It urges Governments to take the necessary measures to ensure the fulfilment of these goals and to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child as early as possible.

7. Second, Agenda 21 emphasizes that children are very aware of environmental concerns and their interests need to be taken into account so that they can participate fully in safeguarding the environment (para. 25.12). It urges all concerned to:

(a) Support programmes that "involve young people and children in environment and development issues, such as children's and youth hearings, building on decisions of the World Summit for Children" (para. 36.10 (j));

(b) Design work plans on environmental activities in all schools "with the participation of students and staff" by involving schoolchildren in "local and regional studies on environmental health, including safe drinking water, sanitation, food and ecosystems" (para. 36.5 (e));

(c) "Make child-oriented material available to media as an educational tool, ensuring close cooperation between the out-of-school public information sector and the school curriculum, for the primary level" (para. 36.10 (e)).

8. UNICEF was requested specifically to "develop programmes for children and programmes to mobilize children" (para. 25.15) by fostering cooperation and collaboration among Governments, NGOs and other United Nations agencies, with specific focus on:

(a) Primary environmental care (PEC) to meet basic needs of communities, improve the environment for children at household and community levels and encourage the participation and empowerment of local populations;

(b) Expansion of educational opportunities for children and youth, especially the girl child, to inculcate environmental and developmental responsibility;

(c) Mobilization of children and parents, through schools and health centres, to sensitize communities to environmental issues;

(d) Advocacy to incorporate children's concerns into relevant policies and strategies for environment and development at local, regional and national levels. In addition, together with the United Nations Development Fund for Women, UNICEF was given the responsibility to "[promote] operational programmes ... that will strengthen the participation of women, especially low-income women, in sustainable development and in decision-making" (para. 24.9).

9. All these activities are intersectoral and are linked to other chapters and programme areas in Agenda 21. Of particular relevance to UNICEF are: combating poverty (chap. 3); demographic dynamics and sustainability (chap. 5, programme area C); protecting and promoting human health (chap. 6, programme areas A to E); human settlements and development (chap. 7, programme areas D and F); combating deforestation (chap. 11, programme area B); combating desertification and drought (chap. 12, programme areas B, D, F); sustainable mountain development (chap. 13, programme area B); sustainable agriculture and rural development (chap. 14, programme areas B, C, K); protecting fresh water resources (chap. 18, programme areas D and E); and education, public awareness and training (chap. 36, programme areas A, B, C). 1/

C. Institutional arrangements for the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

Commission on Sustainable Development

10. General Assembly resolution 47/11 of 22 December 1991 requests the Economic and Social Council to establish at its 1993 organizational session a high-level Commission on Sustainable Development to ensure an effective follow-up to UNCED, as well as to enhance international cooperation and rationalize intergovernmental decision-making capacity for the integration of environment and development issues. A multi-year thematic programme of its work will be discussed at its first session. The resolution also requests the governing bodies of all specialized agencies and related organizations of the United

Nations system to review their policies, programmes, budgets and activities and to strengthen and adjust those pertaining to sustainable development along the lines suggested in Agenda 21. The Commission on Sustainable Development will be assisted in its function by a high-level advisory board.

United Nations machinery for sustainable development

11. At the initiative of the Secretary-General, the Administrative Committee on Coordination, at its second regular session in October 1992, established the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development. Its main task is to identify major policy issues relating to the follow-up to UNCED by the United Nations system and to advise the Administrative Committee on how to ensure effective cooperation and coordination of the United Nations system in the implementation of Agenda 21. Before the April 1993 session of the Administrative Committee, the nine-member inter-agency committee is expected to launch a process utilizing inter-agency consultations to assist the Administrative Committee in streamlining the coordinating machinery; allocating and sharing responsibilities for implementation of Agenda 21 by the United Nations system; monitoring new and additional financial requirements of United Nations system organizations related to Agenda 21, taking into account the decisions of their governing bodies; and assessing new and existing reporting requirements related to implementation of Agenda 21 and making recommendations on how these requirements can be streamlined.

12. In addition, a new Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, headed by an under-secretary-general, has been created within the United Nations to provide support for the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development and the high-level advisory board. It will also work closely with relevant organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system (including the Joint Consultative Group on Policy), as well as other expert bodies outside the United Nations system, to coordinate activities concerning environment and sustainable development, in particular the follow-up to Agenda 21.

II. UNICEF RESPONSE TO AGENDA 21

A. Current involvement of country offices in environment

13. UNICEF country offices have reported an increasing interest in the environment, spurred by dialogue with various partners in preparation for, and as a follow-up to, UNCED. At the request of Governments, several country offices assisted in conducting studies and situation analyses linking the state of the environment to the plight of the poor, with particular reference to children and women, and in co-sponsoring national seminars and conferences on the topic. These were included in the national reports prepared for UNCED. A large number of country offices initiated public campaigns and children's hearings to increase environmental awareness among schoolchildren and to involve them in the protection and improvement of the environment around their school, home and community.

14. These activities supplemented regular country programmes where environmental components were included as integral parts, at household and

community levels, to improve the well-being of children and their families. Programmes that bear particular relevance in this context are: (a) provision of clean water, adequate sanitation and health education, including personal and household hygiene; (b) ensuring household food security and promoting knowledge of food preparation techniques to reduce malnutrition; (c) delivery of primary health care (PHC) services, including the Bamako Initiative, through community participation and control; (d) enhancing basic life skills as part of "education for life" through formal and non-formal education, "third channel" activities and mobilizing people to use Facts for Life; (e) promotion of such activities related to women and development as food processing, handicrafts, appropriate technologies for reducing women's workload, small business promotion and raising of livestock; and (f) provision of integrated basic services in rural and urban areas related to maternal and child health, water supply and environmental sanitation, food and nutrition, education and training, income-generating activities and, to a certain extent, fuel-efficient cooking stoves, alternative energy supplies and small-scale agroforestry.

15. These programmes are characterized by community participation and empowerment, education, cost-effective solutions, appropriate technologies and adaptation to local cultures and priorities. A close working relationship with NGOs and local communities is promoted, as is the involvement of local women. Advocacy and social mobilization constitute an essential part of the programmes. Although it is not possible to disaggregate the budgetary allocation to the environmental component as such, these related activities constitute at least $100 million, or 12 per cent of total UNICEF programme expenditure. If immunization and other health-related expenditures designed to improve the immediate environment of children and women are included, the total amounts to at least one half of UNICEF programme expenditure.

16. These human-centred, poverty-focused UNICEF programmes are crucial for reducing child illness and malnutrition and for reaching the goals of the World Summit for Children. But they also help, as the Secretary-General of UNCED noted, "to slow population growth and make possible environmentally sustainable development in the twenty-first century and beyond". 2/ There is, however, much more to be done to strengthen these programmes further. The environmental dimension has to be made more explicit in the UNICEF country programming process. For achieving sustainability of the important achievements made so far, PEC holds great promise. It provides an approach that integrates the effort to meet basic needs through empowerment of people to improve their environment. This is consistent with the recent multi-donor evaluation of UNICEF activities that recommends that empowerment and capacity-building be given greater attention, in conjunction with delivery of basic services.

B. Primary environmental care

17. Environmental concerns are wide-ranging and encompass all facets of life. As in the case of health, where the concept of PHC is distinguished from higher-level referral services and specialized medical care, or in education, where basic primary education is distinguished from secondary and tertiary level education, UNICEF finds it effective to concentrate its actions in PEC. The concept of PEC is a community-based development approach that has three interrelated elements: meeting basic needs; empowering local communities; and

ensuring the protection and optimal use of natural resources in and around the community. The basic premise is that environmental considerations must be linked to economic and social progress because environmental fragility and degradation directly threaten the livelihood of most people in developing countries. Innovative environmental interventions at the community level are necessary to enable people, especially the poor, to manage their resources responsibly and creatively so that they can meet the key World Summit goals related to PHC, nutrition, household food security and access to low-cost water supply, environmental sanitation and basic education. At the same time, experience shows that meeting these social development goals can be particularly beneficial in protection of the environment.

18. The empowerment of children and women is crucial. Any society that cannot care for its children cannot regard its development as sustainable. The growing minds of children must be infused with the fundamental precepts of: their rights to a "first call" on resources for decent livelihood as outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and agreed to at the World Summit for Children; and their responsibility to future generations to pass on a healthy environment that will enable children to enjoy the fruits of a better world. Women are the most important resource managers and must have access to and rights over land and other resources, education and safe and equal employment, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. Apartheid based on gender must be stopped.

19. There are two types of environmental deterioration that PEC seeks to prevent:

(a) Resource degradation (erosion of topsoil, deforestation) poses a threat, especially in such ecologically fragile and vulnerable areas as arid and semi-arid zones, mountainous regions, rain forests and urban slums, due to drought, desertification, deforestation and inappropriate development activities. The objective of PEC, in this respect, is to improve the availability, in terms of quantity and quality, of the natural resources that provide food, fuel and clean water;

(b) Pollution in the form of biological pathogens and chemical pollutants causes ill health and premature death due to water-borne diseases attributable mainly to the lack of clean water and safe sanitation and air-borne diseases spread by overcrowding, poor ventilation and indoor air pollution from burning of coal and fuelwood. PEC activities are directed to bringing about effective behavioural changes, at both household and community levels, in alleviating the hazards of pollution. 3/

C. Lessons learned from selected case examples of primary environmental care

20. PEC activities, although not known explicitly by that name except in a few recent cases, have been an integral part of UNICEF health, nutrition, education, and water supply and sanitation programmes. The environmental perspective is often more prominent in area-based development programmes which seek to provide integrated basic services in rural and urban areas. Seven cases are described

in the annex to illustrate the various types of innovations pursued in different ecosystems in response to specific social, cultural and economic circumstances.

21. The project in Bangladash illustrates the mobilization of resources with the objective of changing the method of excreta disposal by building household latrines and by providing hygiene education. The project in Botswana provides an example of using local resources more effectively to generate alternate income-generating opportunities by building new businesses based on indigenous knowledge and capability. The Brazil project, as a part of the Amazonia subregional project, is a response to the problems of the indigenous population and other poor communities caused by massive deforestation in the Amazon Basin - a result of logging, monoculture, gold mining and petroleum extraction, and further compounded by the decline in world market prices of primary commodities. The Madagascar project represents an example of effective advocacy of a pilot initiative at the district level that led to national efforts in the area of environmental education and development, with a specific focus on children and women. In Nepal, community development initiatives have been achieved by reviving the traditional technique of handmade paper making and the production of greeting cards, through use of locally available resources. The Niger case exemplifies the struggle against the scourge of drought and desertification which is devastating people's livelihood, thereby requiring emergency operations on a frequent basis. In the Philippines, UNICEF-assisted relief and rehabilitation measures were transformed into sustainable means of livelihood by introducing low-cost, affordable technologies for food production.

22. Lessons derived from these examples, as well as those of the International Institute for Environment and Development, the Oxford Famine Relief Campaign and Action Aid, are highly relevant to the integration of PEC more thoroughly and more systematically in UNICEF country programmes. 4/ They demonstrate that:

(a) Development must provide opportunities for the poor to enhance their livelihood by focusing on food security, health, water supply, sanitation, basic education and income generation, in accordance with their own priorities;

(b) Technological and organizational approaches must be oriented to the generation and extension of small-scale, low-cost technologies that are appropriate in the local context and that benefit the poor in particular, by building on indigenous knowledge and awareness of the environment and by devising new solutions where old approaches are no longer effective;

(c) Local responsibility and action must be promoted to improve the productivity and protection of existing land, water, forest and other natural resources by ensuring rights of tenure and access to new information and financial resources;

(d) Government institutions and local functionaries must provide the necessary political support to encourage community-based environmental management;

(e) Outside agencies (including government organizations, NGOs, university groups and international agencies) must commit themselves to enter into dialogue for long-term human resources development at the local level by adopting a flexible approach and accepting a longer time-frame for support.

D. Strategic focus for implementing primary environmental care

23. In response to the recommendations of Agenda 21, the UNICEF mandate and operational flexibility for community-level action, through partnership with government agencies, NGOs and local community groups, should be pursued more actively to implement PEC and encourage innovative grass-roots activities. The role of UNICEF as facilitator, through modest seed funding and subsequent emphasis on advocacy and social mobilization, needs to be encouraged so that local capability is strengthened and goals of self-reliance and sustainable development are realized. Three strategic priorities are noteworthy in this regard.

Priority groups needing special attention

24. PEC has special relevance for the poor who are unreached or difficult to reach. The worst victims of environmental degradation include indigenous populations, ethnic minorities, urban slum dwellers and others living on the fringes of society who have been denied the basic services necessary to maintain their livelihood. At least 850 million persons are estimated to be at risk due to desertification; 500 million in the highlands live in jeopardy from soil erosion and deforestation; 200 million in tropical forests are affected by reckless exploitation of resources; and more than 1 billion of the world's urban dwellers live without garbage disposal or waste-water drainage facilities and breathe air filled with excessive suspended particulate matter. 5/ According to the United Nations Development Programme Human Development Report 1992, 80 per cent of the poor in Latin America, 60 per cent in Asia and 50 per cent in Africa live on marginal lands characterized by low productivity and high susceptibility to environmental degradation. 6/

25. Priority should be given to developing programmes that provide these groups with the opportunity to earn sustainable livelihoods in accordance with specific geographic and ecological criteria. The emphasis should be on such integrated human development policies and strategies as empowerment of local community groups, increased local control of resources, income generation, strengthening of local institutions and capacity-building of NGOs and local-level government to be involved in effective delivery mechanisms.

Building environmental awareness among children and women

26. Among the poor, women and children are the most vulnerable. Women are now under increasing stress as they are forced to spend more time in food production and processing under precarious conditions, in collecting water from ever more distant springs and in gathering fuelwood from depleted forests, farther from home. Children become more susceptible to disease and malnutrition as they are left to fend for themselves in polluted areas with scarce resources. If this continues, today's environmental degradation will be felt even more acutely by tomorrow's children.

27. Children must have the "first call" on resources and women must receive priority attention in the process of environmental improvement. They need to be empowered to become active participants in the development process and in environmental improvement. In this connection, children and youth should be given the opportunity for solid environmental education, with particular

emphasis on enhancing life skills and bolstering ethical and moral principles. Their enthusiasm and energy need to be engaged at home and at school in looking for new and innovative opportunities to meet today's basic needs and to save the earth for future generations, and hence become environmentally and socially responsible citizens. From the point of view of women, the necessary emphasis is on achieving equality in all aspects of life, including the promotion of literacy, education and training, nutrition and health status and participation in key decision-making and in management of the environment, particularly as it pertains to access to resources and child spacing.

Advocacy and social mobilization

28. Poverty and environmental degradation of the worst kind call for large-scale operations on different fronts: grass-roots activism; poverty-focused technological development; national policies oriented towards decentralized PEC activities; and international public support for addressing the problems of human deprivation in developing countries. What is needed, as advocated in The State of the World's Children 1993, is a "movement for basic needs".

29. The UNCED process has succeeded in motivating government agencies, local communities, NGOs and bilateral and multilateral donors to pursue environmental and sustainable development initiatives in many countries. The proliferation of interest and opportunities at national and international levels has been remarkable. The tremendous energy and commitment of NGOs is evident from the numbers that attended the UNCED Global Forum: 18,000 persons from 11,000 organizations and 171 countries. It is encouraging that this diverse group, representing a variety of social movements in both developed and developing countries, found common ground on environmental issues as they drafted the NGO treaties for reinforcing mutual support. From the point of view of UNICEF, building solidarity among these diverse groups, particularly at the national level, is a high priority.

30. Based on the mandate, experience and operational flexibility of UNICEF for activities concerning children and women, the strategy for advocacy and social mobilization should be pursued in a number of different ways:

(a) Providing modest seed funds to government agencies, university and research institutions, NGOs and community groups to initiate innovative activities for improved livelihood at household and community levels, especially among the poorest;

(b) Going to scale, by incorporating innovative ideas and opportunities derived from PEC into country programmes and national programmes of action (NPAs);

(c) Social mobilization to promote PEC initiatives at household and community levels, modelled after the success of Facts for Life, by producing similar publications emphasizing the steps to sustainability in the context of the country's social, economic and ecological conditions;

(d) Support for advocacy campaigns: (i) to highlight the concerns of children and women, modelled after the children's hearings organized by the Voice of the Children International Campaign; (ii) to organize children to write

their own version of Agenda 21, as initiated by Peace Child International; and (iii) to hold women's hearings and tribunals at national, regional and global levels, as organized by UNIFEM, Worldwide Network and the Women Environment and Development Organization.

E. Including the primary environmental care perspective in the UNICEF programming process

31. The strategic priorities approved by the Executive Board to achieve the development goals for children in the 1990s (E/ICEF/1990/13, decision 1990/2) provide a comprehensive framework to respond to Agenda 21. Furthermore, the procedure to make the environment more prominent in the country programming process is contained in Executive Board decision 1989/18 (E/ICEF/1989/12). This assumes even greater relevance today, since UNICEF, along with other agencies in the United Nations system, has been asked to contribute towards implementation of Agenda 21. As noted in "Children and environment: a UNICEF strategy for sustainable development" (E/ICEF/1989/L.6):

(a) "Whenever UNICEF undertakes to prepare or update the situation analysis of children and women in the context of its country programming exercise, it should contain a brief chapter or sections highlighting issues of environmental concern not only for the present but also for future generations"; 7/

(b) "UNICEF representatives will be asked to systematically analyse the environmental impact of proposed actions and, where appropriate, to include programme components that are specifically designed to contribute to environmental protection and sustainability"; 8/

(c) "In the programme appraisal and review processes ... in addition to examining budgetary costs and project outputs or service coverage, long-term environmental costs and the risks and benefits of a given programme should be examined"; 9/

(d) "Environmental concerns" and issues should "be included in the appropriate training and orientation programmes for staff". 10/

These steps should be pursued more systematically and with increased vigour.

32. It is now necessary to develop and refine such tools, indicators and methods as situation analyses, programme reviews, strategy formulations and programme evaluations that can be used by country offices to analyse the causes and consequences of environmental change at different stages of the programming process. The purpose of such analysis is to incorporate the principles of PEC in country programme strategies and NPAs to achieve the goals of the World Summit for Children, on a sustainable basis.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

33. The Executive Director recommends that the Executive Board approve the following recommendations:

The Executive Board

Decides that

(a) UNICEF take active steps, by maintaining close cooperation and collaboration with the Commission on Sustainable Development and other agencies of the United Nations system, as well as Governments and NGOs, and in accordance with the recommendations contained in Agenda 21, to develop programmes for children and women, incorporating PEC as a fundamental approach to ensure the active participation and empowerment of children and women for meeting their basic needs on a sustainable basis and for the protection and optimal utilization of natural resources in and around the community;

(b) While implementing PEC, priority be given to: (i) the poorest who are hardest to reach and are living in the most environmentally degraded and vulnerable conditions; (ii) the empowerment of children and women through greater awareness of opportunities for enhanced livelihood and environmental improvement; and (iii) solidarity with NGOs, to include the concerns of children and women as essential components of social movements in support of environment and sustainable development;

(c) Emphasis be given to developing and refining tools, indicators and methods for the systematic analysis of environmental causes and consequences during situation analyses, programme reviews, evaluations and strategy meetings, in order to assist Governments and UNICEF field offices in ensuring that NPAs contain PEC elements and that UNICEF country programmes provide support for PEC wherever feasible and appropriate;

(d) The UNICEF mandate, experience and operational flexibility be used to: (i) give modest seed funds to UNICEF partners to initiate innovative PEC activities to demonstrate their viability prior to larger-scale implementation; (ii) encourage social mobilization through schools and health centres so that children and their parents become effective focal points for sensitization of communities to environmental issues; and (iii) support advocacy campaigns to incorporate the concerns of children and women in relevant policies and strategies at the local, regional and national levels;

(e) The proposal on the global fund for environment, which seeks $2.5 million in general resources and $6.0 million in supplementary funding as part of the Programme Funds for the 1990s Goals, be approved in order to support planning, project preparation and specific actions over the 1994-1995 biennium to encourage the inclusion of more and better quality environmentally-oriented actions within UNICEF country programmes;

(f) The Executive Board invite the Commission on Sustainable Development to include the goals and strategies for children in the 1990s in its deliberations on the multi-year thematic programme of work at its first

substantive session and in the monitoring of progress concerning the implementation of Agenda 21;

(g) The Executive Board call upon donor countries, international financial institutions and all agencies of the United Nations system to increase funding for child-related PEC activities, as recommended in Agenda 21, with a view to allocating 20 per cent of official development assistance to human development priorities.

Notes

1/ UNICEF, Children and Agenda 21: A Guide to UNICEF Issues in the Earth Summit's Blueprint for Development and Environment into the 21st Century (Geneva, 1992).

2/ Quoted in UNICEF, The State of the World's Children 1993 (Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1993).

3/ UNICEF/United Nations Environment Programme, The State of the Environment - 1990: Children and the Environment (New York and Nairobi, 1990).

4/ Joan Davidson, Dorothy Myers and Manab Chakraborty, No Time to Waste: Poverty and the Global Environment (Oxford, Oxfam, 1992; and Johan Holmberg (ed.), Policies for a Small Planet (London, Earthscan Publications Ltd., 1992).

5/ Alan B. Durning, Poverty and the Environment: Reversing the Downward Spiral, Worldwatch Paper 92 (Washington, D.C., Worldwatch Institute, 1989).

6/ United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report 1992 (New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992).

7/ "Children and Environment: a UNICEF strategy for sustainable development" (E/ICEF/1989/L.6), para. 87.

8/ Ibid., paragraph 34 (d).

9/ Ibid., paragraph 39.

10/ Ibid., paragraph 91.

Annex

EXAMPLES OF PRIMARY ENVIRONMENTAL CARE

I. ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION IN BANGLADESH

1. In Bangladesh, unsanitary disposal of human excreta and inadequate personal hygiene account for high incidences of diarrhoeal disease and child deaths (about 250,000 persons every year). In 1987, in response to these problems, the Department of Public Health Engineering introduced a system of tube-well installation in the community that requires the construction and use of 5 (and later 10) latrines. This resulted in a reduction in diarrhoeal disease by 25 per cent due to the increase in the number of sanitary latrines (from 4 per cent in 1985 to 26 per cent in 1991), combined with high coverage of water supply and sanitation and hygiene education.

2. Social mobilization was pursued actively as part of the campaign. "Court meetings" were arranged where field workers discussed sanitation, family planning and immunization with groups of 25 to 30 families. High school students undertook visits to the local community. These efforts were strengthened by the distribution of communication packages for sanitation and hygiene education and the use of tube-well water for all domestic purposes. In addition, curricula were upgraded and change agents were trained.

3. It is a positive sign that the demand for latrines is growing. The number of private latrine manufacturers is increasing rapidly and low-cost latrines are being developed to provide more options at a lower cost. The current UNICEF water supply and sanitation programme (1992-1995) is allocating 35 per cent of funds to the sanitation sector.

II. SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION OF VELD PRODUCTS IN BOTSWANA

4. Because of the drought-prone, semi-arid climate in Botswana, household food security and economic security have been major problems. Thusano Lefatsheng, a local NGO, responded to these problems by initiating an innovative undertaking involving sustainable production of the under-used veld (grassland) products as a viable income-generating alternative. Veld products are adapted to the harsh and variable climate and their harvesting and processing do not compete for time at peak periods of the agriculture calendar.

5. A small research farm, Thusego, was created in 1984. Remarkable achievements have been accomplished since then through a range of activities, among them purchasing, processing and marketing (nationally and internationally) of the "Kalahari devil's claw", a natural cure for various ailments; and developing, processing and promoting jam and local beer out of morula fruit, oil out of morula kernels, staple food out of morama tubers, protein-rich butter and livestock feed out of morama beans, as well as a range of herbal "bush teas". This has resulted in: (a) the employment of 1,700 people, 70 per cent of whom are women and 85 per cent of whom are from disadvantaged ethnic groups in districts where economic opportunities are extremely limited; (b) the development and promotion of ecologically sound harvesting and protection

techniques for wild plants and wildlife; and (c) the development of a profitable "whole farm" approach with traditional and new crops, medicinal plants, trees and livestock.

6. The enterprise is expected to be self-supporting by 1993. Initial funding for the project was provided mainly by HIVOS, an NGO in the Netherlands. UNICEF provided support for expansion of the project. In 1993-1994, the activities will extend to a fourth district, with support in part from the Norwegian Agency for International Development and UNICEF.

III. PRIMARY ENVIRONMENTAL CARE IN BRAZIL AND THE AMAZON BASIN

7. The "Poverty and Environment Project" in Brazil, coordinated locally by the Federal University of Para, promotes a community-based development approach by drawing on local knowledge of Amazonian conditions and mobilizing State and municipal governments, local communities and university researchers to cooperate closely to meet basic needs of the poor in ways that protect and regenerate the environment. The project has already created an effective, low-cost, decentralized potable water technology that can both reduce water-borne illnesses and protect water resources from contamination in the humid lowlands. Chlorination takes place when the contaminated water mixed with drops of salt solution passes through titanium alloy plates charged with a very low electrical current. The project has also drawn on indigenous forest management practices to develop highly productive, small-scale agroforestry techniques that protect land and forest resources while providing adequate family nutrition and a reasonable income.

8. Within a year of operation, local talent and ideas have proved to be highly productive; community organization has made implementation quick and efficient; and collaboration between organizations has facilitated the mobilization of substantial resources in support of community activities. This approach is being advanced through an Amazon subregional project in which six UNICEF offices serving eight Amazon Basin countries participate. Supplementary funds are now being requested for the participating countries to undertake exploratory projects similar to those carried out in Brazil.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES IN MADAGASCAR

9. A primary school programme was initiated in 1989 in Fenerive in the Toamasina province of Madagascar. School textbooks were prepared for three successive grades by incorporating relevant concepts of nutrition, hygiene and environmental protection and were integrated into classroom teaching. Twice a week, throughout the school year, children, teachers and parents participated in school gardening and fruit tree planting. In 1989, an area-based programme was initiated to involve teachers and interested parents in family gardening and agroforestry, as well as in the construction of latrines, improved stoves and tree nurseries. Low-cost community child-care centres and vocational training for youth were also part of the programme. Local NGOs and relevant government ministries participated in the implementation.

10. Within two years of operation, the project succeeded in fostering a number of community initiatives as evidenced by: the creation of peasants' associations in 5 out of 11 subdistricts; the training of association members in establishing small nurseries; the introduction of new vegetable seeds and coconut and fruit seedlings; the reforestation and soil protection measures in selected sites; and the promotion of improved stoves and ovens.

11. Encouraged by the success in Fenerive, the Ministry of Education announced in 1992 that the model will be introduced in all 13,000 schools around the country. A master plan is currently being prepared. Another initiative has been taken by the National Office of the Environment and the Cellule Mère-Enfant (Mother-Child Unit) of the Prime Minister's Office, in conjunction with the multi-donor effort on the Environmental Action Plan. UNICEF assisted in the design of a programme of action with the help of a group of international and national consultants. Program A-Z, Ankizy sy Zavaboahary: Solofo Dimbin'ny ala, meaning "children and environment: young shoots who renew the forest", is the outcome of this effort. This project is now evolving into Madagascar's NPA, in pursuit of the goals of the World Summit for Children. It will be launched in 1993, first by implementing the new curriculum in the drought-stricken southern province in conjunction with a food relief programme centred in the primary schools.

V. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH HANDMADE PAPER PRODUCTION IN NEPAL

12. In 1981, UNICEF and the Small Farmers Development Programme of the Agricultural Development Bank of Nepal initiated an innovative project that helped to revive and revitalize the 800-year-old technology of making paper out of the bark of lokta bushes (Daphne bholua and D. papyracea). This provided opportunities for additional income to lokta cutters and paper makers during the slack season when demand for agricultural labour is low. The locally made paper was used by Bhaktapur Craft Printers in Kathmandu Valley to print cards for world-wide sale through outlets of the UNICEF Greeting Card and related operations (65 per cent) and through other mechanisms (35 per cent).

13. The project was initiated with UNICEF technical support and a small financial grant over a three-year period. The Small Farmers Development Programme mobilized and organized rural lokta cutters and paper makers in three districts of western Nepal through training in group formation, marketing and accounting. Several critical inputs, not found locally, were also made available.

14. Local income increased threefold in nine years as the number of families engaged in all related processes increased steadily. Gross income from sales increased fourfold during the same period, and in 1985 the company became self-supporting. Plans are under way to make it a private company, with 50 per cent of shares to be held by the Agricultural Development Bank of Nepal, 5 per cent by company staff and 45 per cent by participating communities.

15. Some 50 per cent of the company's net income has been used for a community development fund; 3,000 families have consequently benefited from the installation of potable water supplies and public latrines, school improvements,

health centres, veterinary services, flood control and soil conservation and a micro-hydroelectric installation. All projects identified by the participating families were implemented with at least a 40 per cent contribution from the community. In 1991, annual expenditure on these activities was close to $150,000 (65 per cent from the community).

16. There were many notable innovations during the development process, for example: adoption of sustainable forest management practices, reduction in fuelwood consumption through energy efficient techniques and search for alternative raw materials to substitute for lokta. Over the next five years, the project will be extended to 11 districts. If it succeeds, it will be expanded nationwide.

VI. FIGHT AGAINST DESERTIFICATION IN NIGER

17. Niger, a vast, land-locked Sahelian country, suffers from serious drought and ecological degradation. Such human intervention as tree-felling for fuelwood exacerbates the problem. Consequently, the very survival of people has become threatened. Since 1985, the Government of Niger has responded to the crisis by initiating a campaign to mobilize both the government machinery and local communities to protect the environment and fight against the calamity.

18. Accordingly, UNICEF has included an environmental component in its programmes on nutrition and food security, emergency operations and rehabilitation, water supply and sanitation and education in the provinces of Zinder, Maradi, Tahoua and Tillaberi. A situation analysis with specific focus on the environment was carried out and major constraints related to the ecosystem were identified through dialogue with community members.

19. The process resulted in the implementation of grass-roots programmes in cooperation with government agencies and NGOs, for example: (a) stabilization of sand dunes and restoration of 300 hectares of land; (b) planting of 120 one-kilometre hedge rows as wind-breaks to protect 40 farms, 500 water sources and 12 hectares of forest; (c) protection of pastoral areas from brushfires by digging 60 kilometres of fire-breaks and training and equipping 50 firefighters; (d) establishment of 40 village nurseries and training and equipping 88 caretakers; and (e) education and training of 4,300 students in environmental protection and planting of trees around schools.

VII. FAMILY FOOD PRODUCTION PROGRAMME IN THE PHILIPPINES

20. The economic crisis brought about by a persistent decline in the price of sugar resulted in the displacement of 250,000 sugar workers in 1984 in the province of Negros Occidental. Children died at a rate of 25 per month due to severe malnutrition. In response to the crisis, the Family Food Production Programme was implemented in 1986 by the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction, with UNICEF assistance.

21. The first two years focused on bio-intensive gardens, along with the provision of other basic services for relief and rehabilitation. Bio-intensive gardens are a simple, low-external-input technology that relies on the use of 50 square metres of land, together with organic fertilizers, natural pesticides and indigenous seeds, to provide daily vegetable needs. As a result of the effort, malnutrition was reduced from 40 per cent in 1986 to 25 per cent in 1988. The food-lot module, introduced in the third year, involves the integration of various components on 1,000 square metres of land, such as crops, livestock, fish-ponds and trees, to respond to cash and food needs of the family. Starting in the fourth year, emphasis was placed on institutionalization, concentrating on training for community organizing, technology update and formation of family food production committees at the municipal level.

22. Other notable initiatives during this process included: establishment of school nurseries for vegetable seed production, in which close to 18,000 pupils from 88 schools distributed 34,000 vegetable seedlings and 33 kilograms of vegetable seeds; promotion of farmer-to-farmer transfer of ideas, including sharing of implements, teaching and learning technology and follow-up work; and formation of the Foundation of Community Garden Promoters to help in the transition from relief to self-sufficiency. The forthcoming challenge lies in overcoming such constraints as insecurity in land tenure that has hindered further promotion of food-lot modules and the absence of irrigation water to maintain bio-intensive gardens during the summer months.